

ATF Statistics Show That 90% of Guns Seized in Mexico Come From U.S.

Washington, DC-Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23), a member of the House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, today introduced legislation aimed at reducing border violence by cracking down on illegal gunrunning. Last week Senators Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) and Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) introduced similar legislation in the Senate.

“We must stop this vicious cycle of guns being smuggled across the border to arm drug cartels who then use those weapons in border communities and against our law enforcement agents,” said Rodriguez. “Cracking down on the illegal trafficking of guns into Mexico from the U.S. will save lives, reduce violence in border communities, and make it harder for the drug cartels to arm themselves.”

Sen. Hutchison said, “This legislation will allow the ATF to establish new teams dedicated to disrupting gun smugglers, improve the training of Mexican law enforcement, and hire additional agents in Mexico to improve our ability to trace seized firearms.”

The funding would enable the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) to hire, train and deploy an additional 80 special agents, enough for at least seven more Project Gunrunner Teams in the border region to investigate and help prosecute individuals that traffic weapons into Mexico.

The bill also authorizes \$9.5 million in fiscal years 2009 and 2010 to enhance cooperation between the United States and Mexico. This funding would allow ATF to assign an additional 12 agents to consulates in Mexico to support Mexico's efforts to trace seized weapons and to train Mexican law enforcement officials in anti-trafficking investigative techniques.

According to the ATF, most of the firearms violence in Mexico is perpetrated by drug traffickers who are vying for control of drug trafficking routes to the United States and engaging in turf battles for disputed distribution territories.

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Congressman *Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23)* serves as a Member of the powerful House Appropriations Committee and the Veterans Affairs Committee. For more information about Rodriguez, see his website at rodriguez.house.gov .